



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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### UZH42619.E

Uzbekistan: The Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU), including treatment of its members by the authorities  
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#### The Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU)

Based in Tashkent (*Muslim Uzbekistan* 16 Oct. 2002), the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU) is an independent human rights organization (BBC 9 July 2001) that was established in 1992 (RFE/RL 9 Sept. 1996).

In the mid-1990s, the HRSU split into three factions (ibid. 9 Oct. 2003; ibid. 4 Aug. 2003). Information on the factions could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, there are several sources that have made reference to the Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan (IHROU) (Freedom House 2003; IHF 10 Dec. 2001; ICG 18 Feb. 2003, 31; BBC 4 Mar. 2002), which in March 2002 became an officially recognized organization by the Uzbek government (ibid.). The HRSU had applied for similar registration with the government, which rejected all of its applications (HRW 26 Feb. 2004; *Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004; ICG 18 Feb. 2003, 7; Freedom House 2003). According to Radio Free Europe (RFE/RL), HRSU's applications for registration were rejected because the government considers it to be a political organization with links to the opposition Birlik movement, and under Uzbek law, this disqualifies the HRSU from being registered as a non-governmental organization (9 Oct. 2003). In an August 2001 report, the International Crisis Group (ICG) noted that many provincial and city HRSU branches were headed by Birlik activists (21 Aug. 2001, 7).

In a letter addressed to the Chairman of the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani, indicated that the HRSU was "labelled a 'terrorist organization' by the [Uzbek] government" (IHF n.d.). However, the HRSU is a partner of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) (ibid.), and, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW), there is a complete absence of evidence to support that the HRSU is engaged in illegal activities (26 Feb. 2004).

#### Treatment of HRSU's Members by the Authorities (2003-2004)

According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003*, the HRSU experienced difficulties in carrying out its activities throughout 2003 (25

Feb. 2004, Sec. 2.b). HRW reported that between July and October 2003, "persecution" by the government of the HRSU continued (25 Nov. 2003).

The following is a chronological non-exhaustive summary of the treatment of HRSU members by the authorities:

**3 January 2003:** Yuldash Rasulov, a member of the HRSU Karshi branch, was released from prison under an amnesty, after being sentenced to seven years imprisonment in September 2002 for allegedly conducting anti-constitutional activities and distributing extremist literature (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 1.d; HRW 10 Jan. 2003; AFP 10 Jan. 2003; UPI 10 Jan. 2003).

**8 January 2003:** Tursunbai Utamuratov, chair of the Karakalpakstan HRSU branch, received a reduction in his sentence to four years, after being convicted and sentenced to nine years imprisonment on 30 November 2002 for tax evasion-related charges (HRW 1 May 2003).

**23 May 2003:** Olim Toshev, also a journalist who had been fired for publishing an article about law enforcement abuses, was convicted of physically assaulting a woman and was ordered to pay compensation (AP 23 May 2003). Human rights advocates claimed that Toshev never assaulted the woman (*ibid.*).

**28 June 2003:** Odina Abdullayeva, one of the first to join the Distlik HRSU branch, was arrested (BBC International 29 June 2003). Information on the outcome of Abdullayeva's arrest could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

**22 July 2003:** Norpulat Rajabov and Musurmonkul Khamraev, HRSU activists from Kashkadarya, were released from prison, after being sentenced to four and six years imprisonment in September 2002 for their involvement in organizing protests (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 1.d; HRW 25 Nov. 2003).

**26 August 2003:** Jura Muradov was released from prison, after being convicted in September 2002 (*ibid.*; *Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 1.d).

**18 September 2003:** Muimidinjon Kurbanov, Egamnazar Shaimanov and Alikul Srimakov, HRSU members from Dzhizak Oblast, were detained by the police for a short period of time after they met with Freedom House officials in Tashkent (RFE/RL 18 Sept. 2003).

**4-6 October 2003:** Tursunbai Utamuratov, head of the Karakalpakstan HRSU branch, was released from prison after serving 13 months of a nine-year sentence which was handed down in November 2002 for tax evasion, assault, resisting arrest and forgery (*ibid.*; HRW 25 Nov. 2003).

**23 January 2004:** The Yunusobod district interior department for visa and registration procedures rejected HRSU chairman Tolibs Yoqubov's application for an exit visa, which he requested to be able to attend a conference on human rights in Kyrgyzstan (*Muslim Uzbekistan* 24 Jan. 2004).

**16 February 2004:** Muidinjon Kurbanov, chairman of a regional HRSU branch

was arrested on what Human Rights Watch termed to be "politically motivated charges" (HRW 26 Feb. 2004). No additional information on these charges could be found by the Research Directorate among the sources consulted.

**Early 2004:** Moydinjon Qurbonov, chairman of Zarbdor HRSU branch, was arrested (*Muslim Uzbekistan* 24 Feb. 2004) on possession of weapons-related charges (*Tashkent Hrakat* 23 Mar. 2004).

In February 2004, HRW reported that authorities were continuing their efforts to have Elena Urlaeva, an HRSU member, "declared 'legally incompetent'" (HRW Jan. 2004). In 2002, she was reportedly arrested, detained in a psychiatric hospital against her will and was administered psychiatric drugs (Freedom House 2003, 90).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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